

BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DOCKET NO. 2003-316-C - ORDER NO. 2004-533  
OCTOBER 26, 2004

IN RE: Request for Local Calling Between the Greer     ) ORDER  
          and Spartanburg Exchanges                     ) ADDRESSING  
  ) EAS  
  )

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) for discussion of the Extended Area Calling (EAS)(or local calling) proposal between the Greer and Spartanburg exchanges. This Commission had previously requested community of interest studies for Greer and Spartanburg two-way non-optional calling. For two-way EAS for Greer to/from Spartanburg, the monthly per line additive for customers in each exchange would be \$.31, with a one time charge of \$.98 per line charge to cover balloting. The community of interest appears to be relatively limited under the studies.

In its letter to the Commission's Executive Director of June 30, 2004, BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. (BellSouth) notes that some years ago, EAS studies were numerous. However, when the total customer body in the relevant exchanges were balloted, they often rejected the monthly increase in rates. As an alternative, the local exchange companies developed area-calling products (called Area Plus by BellSouth). According to BellSouth, these products provided reasonably priced flat-rate alternatives to those customers who placed the majority of the calls to the distant city. BellSouth

notes that it is fundamentally fair that only the customers who call the distant city pay a higher rate, while all other customers have no increase in their monthly rate. Also of note, BellSouth states that there are many new long distance unlimited calling plans now available from both wireless and wire line companies, including BellSouth that lessens the need for EAS.

We have considered this matter, and, due to the relatively limited community of interest as indicated by BellSouth's study and the results of prior balloting on this issue, this Commission is reluctant to ask BellSouth and the Commission Staff to expend the financial and personnel resources necessary to conduct a ballot on this proposal. However, this Commission does wish to see that every opportunity to provide desired services to these communities is used. Accordingly, we are requiring the parties to explore other options for providing expanded service between these two exchanges, such as, but not limited to, optional calling plans such as those mentioned in BellSouth's letter to this Commission. Further, we will delay a vote on this matter until such time as the other options have been explored and reported back to this Commission.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

/s/  
Randy Mitchell, Chairman

ATTEST:

/s/  
G. O'Neal Hamilton, Vice Chairman

(SEAL)